

## Never Alone

Kylie Cumberland is a freshman at Clarkdale Attendance Center. She is the daughter of Johnny and Tina Cumberland and has a little brother. The family attends NorthPark Church of God, where Kylie is active in the youth group. After high school, she wants to attend Auburn University and major in architectural design. In this difficult time for our country and our families, Kylie chose to write about her faith in the future.



Cumberland

I am not alone and never will be.  
I see the people all around me.  
They are my family; they are my friends.  
They will be there until the very end.  
We come together, stand as one.  
We remember the memories, all the fun.  
As we are weak and wounded now,  
Good will come out of this some way, somehow.  
As we pray and tears are shared,  
We know that to God's love none can be compared.

— Kylie Cumberland

## Bravo Battery: Among the first units deployed

Megan and Mark Quimby grew up in Lauderdale County. She graduated from Meridian High School, he graduated from Clarkdale Attendance Center. They married in July 2003 in a beach ceremony presided over by Mark's father, and now live in Birmingham, Ala.

Mark is a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Megan submitted this "Bragging Rights" story to share her thoughts about her husband's bravery.

Dear readers,

Many of you may know Cpl. Mark Quimby for his yellow motorcycle or his willingness to do anything to make you laugh.

But some of you may not know that Mark is deployed in Okinawa, Japan. He is with his unit, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, Bravo Battery, which is stationed out of Camp Pendleton in San Diego County, Calif.

They have been in Japan since August of last year. From there, they were shipped to Thailand to act as security forces after the tragic tsunami that hit Southern Asia in December.

Bravo Battery was among the Marines on the front lines of the War in Iraq in March 2003. They spent five months there and were some of the first American soldiers to drive into Baghdad. For all of their courage and achievements in the war, they received many honors and awards ...



SUBMITTED PHOTO

### U.S. MARINE

Cpl. Mark Quimby stands before Mt. Fuji in Japan during his current assignment with the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, Bravo Battery, stationed out of Camp Pendleton in San Diego County, Calif. The members of Bravo Battery were some of the first deployed on the front lines in Iraq in March 2003.

I do want to say a special thank-you to his mom, Kathy Pickard, for welcoming me so lovingly into her family. Thank you, Mrs. Kathy.

I ... feel an overwhelming sense of pride for our military heroes. They are the ones who help make it possible for us to sleep safely in our beds at

night. Thank God for all of them.

Megan Quimby

*p.s. to Mark: I can't convey to you how proud I am to be your wife. I thank God every day for you and pray He will continue to keep you safe in His loving care. I will always love you.*

Read why the  
223rd Engineer  
Battalion said ...

**"We were in the  
middle of it"**

in the Health and  
Medical section.

## Over there for a reason

Shane Parker is a freshman at Meridian Community College. He likes to golf and is a member of Midway Baptist Church. Shane says he plans to become a youth minister "if the Lord wills."

By Shane Parker  
special to The Star

The war in Iraq is a major issue. Many people believe we should not be there, while others believe we should. I, for one, believe we should. The war in Iraq may cost us the lives of many soldiers, but even they believe we are over there for a reason.

Our soldiers fight each and every day to ensure our freedom. The least we can do as friends and family is support them in their cause.

The next time you think this war isn't worth fighting, remember what our soldiers are fighting

for. Better yet, remember what your son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, husband or wife is fighting for. When we say that we shouldn't fight this war, we are also saying that our soldiers are dying for nothing.

They are dying for a reason, and some live to fight another day for it. It is one of the greatest things someone can ever fight for. It gives us hope, courage, safety and warmth.

It can be taken away from our land, but not from our hearts. These soldiers believe in this reason. If they didn't, then they wouldn't be fighting for it.

The next time you think of the war, think of the reason. The reason is not to settle a score with some other country — or even to say that we are better than they. This reason is far greater than that. It means everything to me, and it should mean everything to you. That reason is freedom!

## Getting down to business as a 'single parent'

Hope Muise is a supply technician with L-3 Vertex Aerospace at Naval Air Station Meridian. She and her husband, Don, have a 5-year-old daughter, Kailee.

Don is a staff sergeant with the Mississippi Army National Guard's 185th Aviation Group, Company G. He was activated in January 2004, and is expected to return home soon. Don is stationed at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, where he is a refueler for CH-47D Chinook helicopters.

By Hope Muise  
special to The Star

I am a military wife with a husband stationed in Iraq and a 5-year-old daughter at home. After the initial fear of being a single parent subsided, I got down to business.

There are good days and there are bad days. The feeling of being alone was new and somewhat overwhelming — but being able to instant message my husband on a daily basis, seeing him through a Web cam and conversing with him occasionally make it easier to cope.

The support of family and a few friends helped to ease the anxiety the mandatory separation brought. It is something that I did not want to do, but I was forced to do for the sake of our daughter. I had to make her world appear as normal and routine as possible.

One of the hardest things was trying to explain to our tearful daughter why her daddy was away. Our daughter and I pray every night for her daddy and the other soldiers.

I am extremely proud of the job my husband is doing in Iraq, and I support him 100 percent.

Now that this separation has almost ended, I am anxiously awaiting his safe return. In retrospect, I find that I am much more confident in my abilities both as a mother and wife. I have become more organized and efficient both in dealing with household responsibilities



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Staff Sgt. Don Muise with his wife, Hope, and daughter, Kailee.

and my role as a parent.

There was, however, a brief respite from this unhappiness when my husband unexpectedly returned home for two weeks leave. What a great time we shared. We were a family once again. The only problem was that the time passed all too quickly.

Now I am happily planning for his return for good. There is finally light at the end of the tunnel and ... I have several things planned for his homecoming, and they are all developing nicely.

I long to feel complete once again, and he completes me.

“  
Now that this  
separation has  
almost ended, I am  
anxiously awaiting  
his safe return.  
In retrospect, I find  
that I am much more  
confident in my  
abilities both as a  
mother and wife.”